

Apostate church organization: 588 - 606 AD: The final dog fight for control of the world!

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Summary of this section:

- 1 588 AD Constantinopolitan synod: John IV the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, is granted the title of "oecumenical" or "universal bishop," but doesn't start using it till 595 AD.
- 2 590 AD: Gregory I, the great, becomes Patriarch of Rome, 590-604 AD
- 3 595 AD: John IV the Faster, starts using the title of "universal bishop" and Gregory I, denies the title even for himself. Bishop of Rome, Gregory I protests John IV the Faster's use of the title "universal bishop" saying such a claim is a sign "the antichrist is near" and calls it a "proud and profane title" and equates John IV's to the devil himself.
- 4 595 AD: John IV the Faster dies on September 2, shortly after claiming to be pope of the world.
- 5 602 AD Roman Emperor Maurice is murdered in a coup by Phocas, who then becomes emperor.
- 6 604 AD Gregory, the bishop of Rome dies and is replaced by Sabinian, who reigns for two years.
- 7 606 AD Sabinian, the bishop of Rome dies and is replaced by Boniface III. Phocas writes to the new bishop of Rome, Boniface III and through imperial decree of the Roman government, proclaims Boniface III, as the "Head of all the

Churches" and "Universal Bishop". Phocas transfers the title from Constantinople to Rome. Boniface III, Bishop of Rome takes title: "universal Bishop": Catholicism is formally born in its final evolved form but the east never accepts Rome's claims and finally split fellowship with Rome in 1054 AD.

8 607 AD: Boniface III dies on 19 February, shortly after claiming to be pope of the world. It is interesting that the first eastern leader (John IV) to proclaim himself as "universal bishop" and the first western (Boniface III) leader, to do the same, died within 12 months of claiming to be the "universal bishop". **Was God sending a message here?**

9 In summary, when John IV, Patriarch of Constantinople, started calling himself the "Universal Bishop" Gregory I, Patriarch of Rome, did not say, "Hey that's my title, you have right to wear it." Instead Gregory said that no man should consider himself the "Universal Bishop" calling it the sign the "antichrist" was near. (see 2 Thess 2:3-4) The bishop of Constantinople, John IV. was saying, "I am over you", Gregory was saying, "we are equal", even though Gregory would readily make the false claim that he, not John, was a successor of Apostle Peter.



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The Historical Development of the Papal and Patriarchal Systems of Centralized Church Government.

588 - 606 AD: The final dog fight between Rome and Constantinople for control of the world!

A. Our comments and observations:

1. 588 AD marked the beginning of a great power struggle and rivalry between Old Rome (West, Italy) and New Rome (East, Constantinople). It was actually this power struggle that accelerated the Bishop of Rome to take on the title of Universal Bishop. Neither one was "over" the others district, but were viewed as equals, although Rome had made claims of supremacy that were not accepted elsewhere.

2. Later this title was confirmed to John IV., the Faster, when he was officially proclaimed "universal bishop" via a synod in 588 AD by the emperor. Gregory strongly renounced any suggestion that he was a "universal Bishop" and viciously objected to John IV's use of it.
3. Gregory warns that John's use of "Universal Bishop" is a sign the antichrist was near! He was referring to this verse: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [the second coming] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." (2 Thess 2:3-4)
4. What is most important here, is that when John IV, Patriarch of Constantinople, started calling himself the "Universal Bishop" Gregory I, Patriarch of Rome, did not say, "Hey that's my title, you have right to wear it." Instead Gregory said that no man should consider himself the "Universal Bishop" calling it the sign the "antichrist" was near. (see 2 Thess 2:3-4) The bishop of Constantinople, John IV. was saying, "I am over you", Gregory was saying, "we are equal", even though Gregory would readily admit he, not John, was a successor of Apostle Peter.
5. It is interesting that the first eastern leader (John IV) to proclaim himself as "universal bishop" and the first western (Boniface III) leader, to do the same, died within 12 months of claiming to be the "universal bishop". Was God sending a message here?

B. What scholars say about this period:

1. "this patriarchal power was not from the beginning and to a uniform extent acknowledged in the entire West. Not until the latter part of the sixth century did it reach the height we have above described. It was not a divine institution, unchangeably fixed from the beginning for all times, like a Biblical article of faith; but the result of a long process of history, a human ecclesiastical institution" (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)
2. "And such universal power had already been claimed by Roman pontiffs before Gregory, such as Leo I., Felix, Gelasius, Hormisdas, in language and acts more haughty and self-sufficient than his. [ie. Gregory 1]" (History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff, Vol 4, ch 4, 51. Gregory and the Universal Episcopate)

C. 588 AD Constantinopolitan synod: John IV the Faster, patriarch of

Constantinople, is granted the title of "oecumenical" or "universal bishop," but doesn't start using it till 595 AD.

1. This synod, rejects the decree of Roman emperor Justinian I in 533 AD, that proclaimed the bishop of Rome supreme head of all churches. Pope Pelagius II immediately protests the synod of 588. The text of this synod is unknown. A decretal which claims to be the words of the synod, is an admitted forgery. We regret not having the words of this synod, for it allows Catholics to make guesses about the content that no one knows are for sure, creating confusion. We can only know the contents of the synod, based upon others who reacted to it.
2. "In other letters we find him saying, "With respect to the Constantinopolitan church, who doubts that it is subject to the apostolical see?" and "I know not what bishop is not subject to it, if fault is found in him" (Ep. vii. ind. ii. 64, 65). But the most memorable incidents in this connexion are his remonstrances against the assumption by John the Faster of the title of oecumenical or universal bishop. They began in 595, being provoked by the repeated occurrence of the title in a judgment against an heretical presbyter which had been sent to Rome. The title was not new. Patriarchs had been so styled by the emperors Leo and Justinian, and it had been confirmed to John the Faster and his successors by a general Eastern synod at Constantinople in 588, pope Pelagius protesting against it. Gregory now wrote to Sabinianus, his apocrisiarius at Constantinople, desiring him to use his utmost endeavours with the patriarch, the emperor, and the empress, to procure the renunciation of the title; and when this failed, he himself wrote to all these in peculiarly strong language. The title he called foolish, proud, pestiferous, profane, wicked, a diabolical usurpation; the ambition of any who assumed it was like that of Lucifer, and its assumption a sign of the approach of the king of pride, i.e. Antichrist. His arguments are such as to preclude himself as well as others from assuming the title, though he implies that if any could claim it, it would be St. Peter's successors. Peter, he says, was the first of the apostles, yet neither he nor any of the others would assume the title universal, being all members of the church under one head, Christ. He also states (probably in error) that the title had been offered to the bishop of Rome at the council of Chalcedon, and refused. Failing entirely to make an impression at Constantinople, he addressed himself to the Eastern patriarchs. He wrote to Eulogius of Alexandria and Anastasius of Antioch, representing the purpose of their brother of Constantinople as being that of degrading them, and usurping to himself all ecclesiastical power. They, however, were not thus moved to

action; they seem to have regarded the title as one of honour only, suitable to the patriarch of the imperial city; and one of them, Anastasius, wrote in reply that the matter seemed to him of little moment. The controversy continued after the death of John the Faster. Gregory instructed his apocrisiarius at Constantinople to demand from the new patriarch, Cyriacus, as a condition of intercommunion, the renunciation of the proud and impious title which his predecessor had wickedly assumed. In vain did Cyriacus send a nuncio to Rome in the hope of arranging matters: Gregory was resolute, and wrote, "I confidently say that whosoever calls himself universal priest, or desires to be so called in his elation, is the forerunner of Antichrist." At this time he seems to have gained a supporter, if not to his protest, at any rate to the paramount dignity of his own see, in Eulogius of Alexandria, whom he had before addressed without result. For in answering a letter from that patriarch, he acknowledges with approval the dignity assigned by him to the see of St. Peter, and expresses adroitly a curious view of his correspondent, as well as the patriarch of Antioch, being a sharer in it. "Who does not know," he says, "that the church was built and established on the firmness of the prince of the apostles, by whose very name is implied a rock? Hence, though there were several apostles, there is but one apostolic see, that of the prince of the apostles, which has acquired great authority; and that see is in three places, in Rome where he died, in Alexandria where it was founded by his disciple St. Mark, and in Antioch where he himself lived seven years. These three, therefore, are but one see, and on that one see sit three bishops, who are but one in Him Who said, I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." But when Eulogius in a second letter styled the bishop of Rome universal pope, Gregory warmly rejected such a title, saying, "If you give more to me than is due to me, you rob yourself of what is due to you. Nothing can redound to my honour that redounds to the dishonour of my brethren. If you call me universal pope, you thereby own yourself to be no pope. Let no such titles be mentioned or ever heard among us." (Henry Wace, *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Gregorius, 51, I, p 425)

D. 590 AD: Gregory I, the great, becomes Patriarch of Rome, 590-604 AD

1. Gregory writes the Roman Emperor Maurice and asks for the title "universal bishop" to be stripped from the bishop of Constantinople, but Maurice refuses.
2. "with Gregory I. (590-604) a new period begins. Next to Leo I. he was the greatest of the ancient bishops of Rome, and he marks the transition of the

patriarchal system into the strict papacy of the middle ages. For several reasons we prefer to place him at the head of the succeeding period." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)

3. "The first Leo and the first Gregory are the two greatest bishops of Rome in the first six centuries. Between them no important personage appears on the chair of Peter; and in the course of that intervening century the idea and the power of the papacy make no material advance. In truth, they went farther in Leo's mind than they did in Gregory's. Leo thought and acted as an absolute monarch; Gregory as first among the patriarchs; but both under the full conviction that they were the successors of Peter (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)

E. Gregory's Territory and the development of Cardinal Bishops:

1. "He [Gregory, 590 AD] was bishop of the city of Rome, metropolitan over the seven suffragan (afterwards called cardinal) bishops of the Roman territory, and patriarch of Italy, in fact of the whole West, or of all the *Latin* churches." (History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff, Book 4, ch 4, 51. Gregory and the Universal Episcopate)
2. "As metropolitan or archbishop, the bishop of Rome had immediate jurisdiction over the seven suffragan bishops, afterward called cardinal bishops, of the vicinity: Ostia, Portus, Silva candida, Sabina, Praeneste, Tusculum, and Albanum." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)

F. 595 AD: John IV the Faster, starts using the title of "universal bishop" and Gregory I, denies the title even for himself

1. John IV the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, starts using the title of "oecumenical" or "universal bishop" in his letters condemning a heretic bishop in 595 AD. Although the title was first granted in 588, this first official use of the title starts a firestorm of protest in Rome from Gregory I. The real battle and controversy began in 595, but was never settled. This was the beginning of a split that would see the Greek orthodox church and Roman Catholic church formally sever fellowship in 1054 AD. This proves that in the early church did not have an officially designated "universal bishop", or else Constantinople would never have taken the title.

G. What Gregory I, actually said in 595 AD to protest John IV the Faster's use of the title "universal bishop": "the antichrist is near"

1. "Lo, he [Peter] received the keys of the heavenly kingdom, and power to bind and loose is given him, the care and principality of the whole Church is committed to him, and yet he is not called the universal apostle; while the most holy man, my fellow-priest John, attempts to be called universal bishop." (Gregory the Great, book V, Epistle XX. To Mauricius Augustus)
2. "Now eight years ago, in the time of my predecessor of holy memory Pelagius, our brother and fellow-bishop John in the city of Constantinople, seeking occasion from another cause, held a synod in which he attempted to call himself Universal Bishop. Which as soon as my said predecessor [Pelagius] knew, he despatched letters annulling by the authority of the holy apostle Peter the acts of the said synod; of which letters I have taken care to send copies to your Holiness. ... wherein by a new act of pride [John claiming title of Universal Bishop], all the bowels of the Universal Church are disturbed. But, if he [John] should altogether refuse to be bent from the stiffness of his elation, then, with the succour of Almighty God, we may consider more particularly what ought to be done." (Gregory the Great, book V Epistle XLIII. To Eulogius and Anastasius, Bishops)
3. "a proud and profane title ... I have however taken care to admonish earnestly the same my brother and fellow-bishop [John of Constantinople] that, if he desires to have peace and concord with all, he must refrain from the appellation of a foolish title. ... the appellation of a frivolous name. But I beseech your imperial Piety to consider that some frivolous things are very harmless, and others exceedingly harmful. Is it not the case that, when Antichrist comes and calls himself God, it will be very frivolous, and yet exceedingly pernicious? If we regard the quantity of the language used, there are but a few syllables; but if the weight of the wrong, there is universal disaster. Now I confidently say that whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist, because he proudly puts himself above all others." (Gregory the Great, Book VII, Epistle XXXIII. To Mauricius Augustus)
4. "Still it is very distressing, and hard to be borne with patience, that my aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop [John of Constantinople], despising all others, should attempt to be called sole bishop. But in this pride of his what else is denoted than that the times of Antichrist are already near at hand?" (Gregory the Great, Book V, Epistle XXI. To Constantina Augusta)
5. "For, having confessed thyself unworthy to be called a bishop, thou hast at length been brought to such a pass as, despising thy brethren, to covet to be named the only bishop. And indeed with regard to this matter, weighty letters were addressed to your Holiness by my predecessor Pelagius of holy memory;

in which he annulled the acts of the synod, which had been assembled among you in the case of our once brother and fellow-bishop Gregory, because of that execrable title of pride, and forbade the archdeacon whom he had sent according to custom to the threshold of our Lord, to celebrate the solemnities of mass with you." (Gregory the Great, Book V, Epistle XVIII. To John, Bishop)

6. "If then he shunned the subjecting of the members of Christ partially to certain heads, as if beside Christ, though this were to the apostles themselves, what wilt thou say to Christ, who is the Head of the universal Church, in the scrutiny of the last judgment, having attempted to put all his members under thyself by the appellation of Universal? Who, I ask, is proposed for imitation in this wrongful title but he who, despising the legions of angels constituted socially with himself, attempted to start up to an eminence of singularity, that he might seem to be under none and to be alone above all? Who even said, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the starts of heaven: I will sit upon the mount of the testament, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isai. xiv. 13)." (Gregory the Great, Book V, Epistle XVIII. To John, Bishop)
7. Still it is very distressing, and hard to be borne with patience, that my aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop, despising all others, should attempt to be called sole bishop. But in this pride of his what else is denoted than that the times of Antichrist are already near at hand? For in truth he is imitating him who, scorning social joy with the legions of angels, attempted to start up to a summit of singular eminence, saying, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven, I will sit upon the mount of the testament, in the sides of the North, and will ascend above the heights of the clouds, and I will be like the most High (Isai. xiv. 13). (Gregory the Great, Book V, Epistle XXI. To Constantina Augusta)

H. What scholars say about Gregory's protest of John's use of the title "universal bishop":

1. "Gregory likens anyone who would claim to be 'universal bishop' to Lucifer himself who attempted to raise his throne above the throne of God Himself (Isaiah 14). Would the modern claims of the papacy qualify for Gregory's ridicule? This author believes that they would." (James R. White, Answers to Catholic Claims, p 122, 1990)
2. "The Reformers also discovered that tradition contradicted tradition. For example, the tradition of the Roman church teaches that the pope is the head

of the church, a bishop over all bishops. But Gregory the Great, pope and saint at the end of the ancient church period, said that such a teaching came from the spirit of Antichrist ('I confidently affirm that whosoever calls himself -sacerdos universalis- [universal priest or bishop], or desires to be so called by others is in his pride a forerunner of Antichrist')." (Robert Godfrey, *What Still Divides Us?*, p14, edited by Don Kistler, 1995)

3. "The attitudes and practices of the Fathers and councils reveal that the church never viewed the bishops of Rome as being endowed with supreme authority to rule the church universal. And there never has been a supreme human ruler in the church. This whole concept was repudiated by Pope Gregory the Great (A.D. 590-604) when he rebuked the bishop of Constantinople for attempting to arrogate to himself the title of 'universal bishop'. He insisted that such a position and title are unlawful in the church of Jesus Christ" (William Webster, *Roman Catholicism*, edited by John Armstrong, page 280, 1994)
4. "He [Gregory I] even solemnly protested, as his predecessor Pelagius II. had done, against the title of universal bishop, which the Constantinopolitan patriarch, John Jejunator, adopted at a council in 587; he declared it an antichristian assumption, in terms which quite remind us of the patriarchal equality, and seem to form a step in recession from the ground of Leo. But when we take his operations in general into view, and remember the rigid consistency of the papacy, which never forgets, we are almost justified in thinking, that this protest was directed not so much against the title itself, as against the bearer of it, and proceeded more from jealousy of a rival at Constantinople, than from sincere humility. From the same motive the Roman bishops avoided the title of patriarch, as placing them on a level with the Eastern patriarchs, and preferred the title of pope, from a sense of the specific dignity of the chair of Peter. Gregory is said to have been the first to use the humble-proud title: "Servant of the servants of God." His successors, notwithstanding his protest, called themselves "the universal bishops" of Christendom. What he had condemned in his oriental colleagues as antichristian arrogance, the later popes considered but the appropriate expression of their official position in the church universal. (*History of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff, Vol 3, ch 5, 64. The Papacy from Leo I to Gregory I. a.d. 461-590.)
5. Especially exposed to criticism were Gregory's joyful and flattering congratulations to Phocas, the bloody usurper who overthrew the Eastern Emperor Maurice. Unless Gregory was strangely ignorant of the character and the doings of Phocas, this certainly was a sad blot upon his record; since

it reveals him as indulging a, grudge which he had entertained against Maurice, in a spirit and manner alike unseemly and unchristian.' [Epist. xiii. 31, 38.] But while censure has its place, Gregory, taken all in all, was, for his age, an eminent and commanding example of the Christian bishop. Though his tone was less lofty than that of some of his successors, Gregory's view of his office did not fall much short of the full papal theory. He disclaimed, it is true, high-sounding titles, such as "universal pope" and "universal bishop." But he had a special incentive to this. To disclaim such titles gave greater force to his criticism of the Patriarch of Constantinople for styling himself universal bishop. Gregory complained bitterly of the assumption of the Eastern prelate, and declared it a fitting introduction to the proud and godless reign of Antichrist. Nevertheless, in the very letters in which he voices his complaints, he claims for the Roman see that general oversight of the Church which one might naturally connect with the rejected name. [Epist. v. 18, 20, 21, ix. 68.] Boniface III., therefore, was adding little or nothing to the actual claims of the papacy, when, a few years after Gregory's death, he accepted from Phocas the title which had been so obnoxious to his illustrious predecessor. (Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, Vol 2, p116-117)

6. "The activity, of Gregory tended powerfully to establish the authority of the papal chair. He combined a triple dignity, episcopal, metropolitan, and patriarchal. He was bishop of the city of Rome, metropolitan over the seven suffragan (afterwards called cardinal) bishops of the Roman territory, and patriarch of Italy, in fact of the whole West, or of all the *Latin* churches. This claim was scarcely disputed except as to the degree of his power in particular cases. A certain primacy of honor among all the patriarchs was also conceded, even by the East. But a universal episcopate, including an authority of jurisdiction over the *Eastern* or *Greek* church, was not acknowledged, and, what is more remarkable, was not even claimed by him, but emphatically declined and denounced. He stood between the patriarchal and the strictly papal system. He regarded the four patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, to whom he announced his election with a customary confession of his faith, as co-ordinate leaders of the church under Christ, the supreme head, corresponding as it were to the four oecumenical councils and the four gospels, as their common foundation, yet after all with a firm belief in a papal primacy. His correspondence with the East on this subject is exceedingly important. The controversy began in 595, and lasted several years, but was not settled. John IV., the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, repeatedly used in his letters the title "oecumenical" or "universal bishop." This was an honorary, title, which had been given to patriarchs by the

emperors Leo [457-474 Leo I] and Justinian [527-565 Justinian I], and confirmed to John and his successors by a Constantinopolitan synod in 588. It had also been used in the Council of Chalcedon of pope Leo I [440-461 AD]. But Gregory I. was provoked and irritated beyond measure by the assumption of his Eastern rival, and strained every nerve to procure a revocation of that title. He characterized it as a foolish, proud, profane, wicked, pestiferous, blasphemous, and diabolical usurpation, and compared him who used it to Lucifer. ... Failing in his efforts to change the mind of his rival in New Rome [Constantinople], he addressed himself to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, and played upon their jealousy; but they regarded the title simply as a form of honor, and one of them addressed him as oecumenical pope, a compliment which Gregory could not consistently accept. After the death of John the Faster in 596, Gregory instructed his ambassador at Constantinople to demand from the new patriarch, Cyriacus, as a condition of intercommunion, the renunciation of the wicked title, and in a letter to Maurice he went so far as to declare, that "whosoever calls himself universal priest, or desires to be called so, was the forerunner of Antichrist." In opposition to these high-sounding epithets, Gregory called himself, in proud humility, "the servant of the servants of God." This became one of the standing titles of the popes, although it sounds like irony in conjunction with their astounding claims. ... But his remonstrance was of no avail. Neither the patriarch nor the emperor obeyed his wishes. Hence he hailed a change of government which occurred in 602 by a violent revolution. ... When Phocas [Roman emperor], an ignorant, red-haired, beardless, vulgar, cruel and deformed upstart, after the most atrocious murder of Maurice and his whole family (a wife, six sons and three daughters), ascended the throne, Gregory hastened to congratulate him and his wife Leontia (who was not much better) in most enthusiastic terms, calling on heaven and earth to rejoice at their accession, and vilifying the memory of the dead emperor as a tyrant, from whose yoke the church was now fortunately freed. This is a dark spot, but the only really dark and inexcusable spot in the life of this pontiff. He seemed to have acted in this case on the infamous maxim that the end justifies the means. His motive was no doubt to secure the protection and aggrandizement of the Roman see. He did not forget to remind the empress of the papal proof-text: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," and to add: "I do not doubt that you will take care to oblige and bind him to you, by whom you desire to be loosed from your sins." The murderer and usurper [Phocas] repaid the favor by taking side with the pope against his patriarch (Cyriacus), who had shown sympathy with the unfortunate emperor. He [Phocas]

acknowledged the Roman church to be "the head of all churches." But if he ever made such a decree at the instance of Boniface III., who at that time was papal nuntius at Constantinople, he must have meant merely such a primacy of *honor* as had been before conceded to Rome by the Council of Chalcedon and the emperor Justinian. At all events the disputed title continued to be used by the patriarchs and emperors of Constantinople. Phocas, after a disgraceful reign (602-610), was stripped of the diadem and purple, loaded with chains, insulted, tortured, beheaded and cast into the flames. He was succeeded by Heraclius. In this whole controversy the pope's jealousy of the patriarch is very manifest, and suggests the suspicion that it inspired the protest. Gregory displays in his correspondence with his rival a singular combination of pride and humility. He was too proud to concede to him the title of a universal bishop, and yet too humble or too inconsistent to claim it for himself. His arguments imply that he would have the best right to the title, if it were not wrong in itself. His real opinion is perhaps best expressed in a letter to Eulogius of Alexandria. He accepts all the compliments which Eulogius paid to him as the successor of Peter, whose very name signifies firmness and solidity; but he ranks Antioch and Alexandria likewise as sees of Peter, which are nearly, if not quite, on a par with that of Rome, so that the three, as it were, constitute but one see. He ignores Jerusalem. ... When Eulogius, in return for this exaltation of his own see, afterwards addressed Gregory as "universal pope," he strongly repudiated the title, saying: "I have said that neither to me nor to any one else (*nec mihi, nec cuiquam alteri*) ought you to write anything of the kind. And lo! in the preface of your letter you apply to me, who prohibited it, the proud title of universal pope; *which thing I beg your most sweet Holiness to do no more*, because what is given to others beyond what reason requires is subtracted from you. I do not esteem that an honor by which I know my brethren lose their honor. My honor is that of the universal Church. My honor is the solid strength of my brethren. I am then truly honored when all and each are allowed the honor that is due to them. For, if your Holiness calls me universal pope, you deny yourself to be that which you call me universally [that is, you own yourself to be no pope]. But no more of this: away with words which inflate pride and wound charity!" He even objects to the expression, "as thou hast commanded," which had occurred in his correspondent's letter. "Which word, commanded, I pray you let me hear no more; for I know what I am, and what you are: in position you are my brethren, in manners you are my, fathers. I did not, therefore, command, but desired only to indicate what seemed to me expedient." On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Gregory, while he protested in the

strongest terms against the assumption by the Eastern patriarchs of the antichristian and blasphemous title of universal bishop, claimed and exercised, as far as he had the opportunity and power, the authority and oversight over the whole church of Christ, even in the East. "With respect to the church of Constantinople," he asks in one of his letters, "who doubts that it is subject to the apostolic see?" And in another letter: "I know not what bishop is not subject to it, if fault is found in him." "To all who know the Gospels," he writes to emperor Maurice, "it is plain that to Peter, as the prince of all the apostles, was committed by our Lord the care of the whole church (*totius ecclesiae cura*) But although the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the power to bind and to loose, were entrusted to him, and the care and principality of the whole church (*totius ecclesiae cura et principatus*), he is not called universal bishop; while my most holy fellow-priest (*vir sanctissimus consacerdos meus*) John dares to call himself universal bishop. I am compelled to exclaim: *O tempora, O mores!*" We have no right to impeach Gregory's sincerity. But he was clearly inconsistent in disclaiming the name, and yet claiming the thing itself. The real objection is to the pretension of a universal episcopate, not to the title. If we concede the former, the latter is perfectly legitimate. And such universal power had already been claimed by Roman pontiffs before Gregory, such as Leo I., Felix, Gelasius, Hormisdas, in language and acts more haughty and self-sufficient than his. No wonder, therefore that the successors of Gregory, less humble and more consistent than he, had no scruple to use equivalent and even more arrogant titles than the one against which he so solemnly protested with the warning: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." But it is a very remarkable fact, that at the beginning of the unfolding of the greatest power of the papacy one of the best of popes should have protested against the antichristian pride and usurpation of the system." (History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff, Vol 4, ch 4, 51. Gregory and the Universal Episcopate)

I. Catholic attempts for damage control: Catholics, aware of the obvious damage Gregory's views of any man calling themselves, "universal Bishop", does towards the modern papal system, will give some very feeble rebuttals. We list them here now with our comments:

- 1. Catholics say: Gregory himself said: "the Church of Christ, who doubts that it is subject to the Apostolic See".** Answer: True, but the Roman bishop had a habit of making these kinds of claims. The fact remains that all the councils and canons before this, showed that Rome did not have total,

absolute control of the universal church. In 325, three patriarchal churches equally ruled the world. In 381 AD, Second Ecumenical Council tried to change the number of ruling churches from 3 to 2 equal powers, and 3 secondary powers. In 451 AD, The fourth ecumenical council, 5 equal patriarchal churches were the rule of the day. While Rome always had top prestige, it was always understood that Rome did not have total control, but shared power with the other patriarchal churches.

2. **Catholics say: Gregory's protest of John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople, taking the title of Universal Bishop, is itself an act where he exercised his [Gregory's] universal jurisdiction.** Answer: Although Gregory's protest could be viewed as exercising his Papal power, there is not reason why we are forced to interpret it this way. After all, every Bishop protested many things of other Bishops for hundreds of years, and Catholics do not view these protests as acts of exercising their universal jurisdiction. In 416 AD, when Roman Bishop. Pope Innocent I, claimed the "chair of Peter" and the Bishop of Constantinople protested was the Bishop of Constantinople exercising the universal jurisdiction? So the Catholic comment is as illogical as it is wrong. But it gets worse for the Catholic position. Catholics see Gregory's protest of John the Faster, taking the title of Universal Bishop, as meaning, that it was Gregory's Title and position alone and that John the Faster was usurping Gregory's position. This is simply not the case and we can prove it: Gregory never takes the title for himself. It is clear that Gregory did not think ANY man on earth, including himself, should wear the title of Universal Bishop. Catholic denials of this fact are a combination of wishful thinking and blind self-delusion.
3. **Catholics say: Gregory was merely condemning John the Faster's misuse of the term, "Universal Bishop" because John was using it to proclaim himself the "only real Bishop, to the exclusion of all others", rather than the correct view, namely the "top Bishop among other bishops", as Gregory viewed it.** Answer: This is historically wrong and a deliberate misreading of what Gregory did in fact say and mean. But we ask Catholics to consider the fact that they believe Pope Leo I, in 451AD, took the title of "Universal bishop". (The truth is that Pope Leo I never did use this title, but it is a Catholic myth.) But since Catholics believe Pope Leo I did use the title, then obviously John the Faster was using the term in exactly the same way as Leo when the Bishop of Constantinople had complained. For Catholics, the term was already in use and well defined. This was a time of power struggle between Rome and Constantinople. The final proof that John did properly define the term, is that Boniface III defined the term EXACTLY

the same way as John did.

4. Catholics say: Gregory objected to John's use of the title "universal bishop" could be applied to anyone, himself included, if by that term one meant there was only one bishop for the whole world and that all other "bishops" were bishops in name only, with no real authority of their own. What Gregory condemned was the expropriation of the title Universal Bishop by Bishop John the Faster, the patriarch of Constantinople, who proclaimed himself Universal Bishop at the Synod of Constantinople in 588. Gregory condemned the patriarch's act because universal jurisdiction applies solely to the pope.

Answer: This has to be one of the clearest cases of illogical double talk we have ever heard. Notice first they say Gregory objected that John was using the title to exclude all other bishops. Then second they say Gregory objected because the title applied only to him, as the Pope, meaning that John had stolen the title from Gregory. So which is it? Did Gregory object because John was wrongly defining the title to mean something different than how Gregory would use the title, or was John correctly defining the title, but had no right to use it because it belonged solely to Gregory? Catholics want it both ways! Here are the facts: First, John never claimed to exclude all other bishops with the title any more than Boniface III did a few years later when he took on the title. We challenge Catholics to prove John ever defined the term in this way! So the first point is irrelevant and a misreading of what John did actually say. Second, Gregory never said the title was wrong because it was solely his to wear, but that no man should ever wear the title. We challenge Catholics to show us where Gregory ever actually used the title, "Universal Bishop"! Finally, the modern Catholic papacy is where the Pope has total universal control of the entire church world wide. His views cannot be overturned by anyone! Isn't this exactly the definition they say John was applying to Universal Pope? In fact, the Pope today, really is in a class by himself with no others. Why are Catholics so illogical?

J. 602 AD Roman Emperor Maurice is murdered in a coup by Phocas, who then becomes emperor.

K. 604 AD Gregory, the bishop of Rome dies and is replaced by Sabinian, who reigns for two years.

L. 606 AD Sabinian, the bishop of Rome dies and is replaced by Boniface III. Phocas writes to the new bishop of Rome, Boniface III and through imperial decree of the Roman government, proclaims Boniface III, as the "Head of all the Churches" and "Universal Bishop". Phocas transfers the

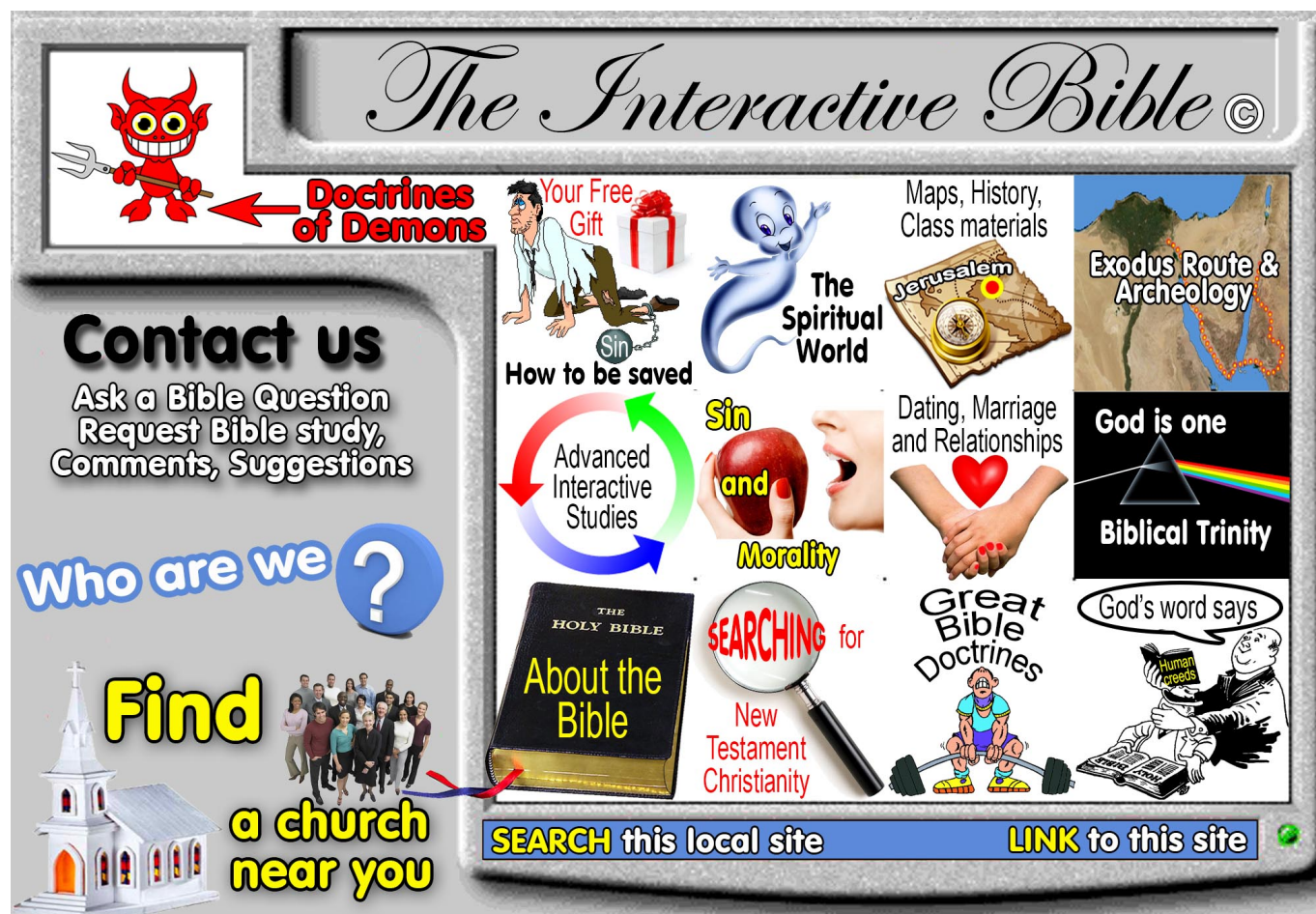
title from Constantinople to Rome. Boniface III, Bishop of Rome takes title: "universal Bishop": Catholicism is formally born in its final evolved form but the east never accepts Romes claims and finally split fellowship with Rome in 1054 AD.

1. "The Roman bishop claims, that the four dignities of bishop, metropolitan, patriarch, and pope or primate of the whole church, are united in himself. The first three offices must be granted him in all historical justice; the last is denied him by the Greek church, and by the Evangelical, and by all non-Catholic sects." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)

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